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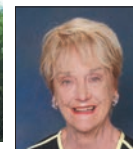
**Wethersfield | \$249,900 | G10225215 | 33 Mill St #3A**  
Spectacular 2BD/2.5BA Condo. Kitchen & bathrooms have granite counters. All kitchen appliances replaced, under cabinet LED lighting added. Extensive electrical & plumbing improvements. Just move in!  
**DickPeplau.com | 860-463-2288**



**Wethersfield | \$239,900 | G10236437 | 15 Avalon Pl**  
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**Wethersfield | \$224,900 | G10229776 | 938 Ridge Rd**  
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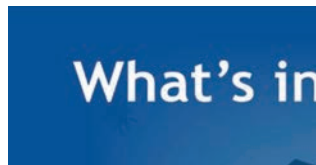
Shirley Davies  
860-922-0093



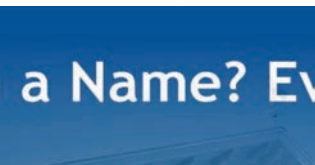
Sandy Whitaker  
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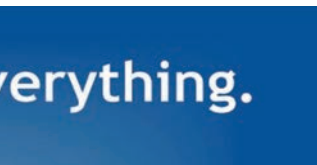
**Wethersfield | \$209,900 | G10227339 | 22 Bunce Rd**  
Great 6 room Ranch on level lot. 3bd, C/A, family room w vaulted ceilings/skylight & sliders to deck. Hardwood floors, fireplace, X-large room in lower level. 2 car garage. Walk to Mill Woods Park.  
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**Wethersfield | \$198,000 | G10232032 | 41 Park Ave**  
Much to like in this 1576 sq ft 3BR/2BA home. Large kitchen and living room with hardwood floors features a gas fireplace for cozy winter evenings or cool summer nights. Walk to park & pool.  
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Move right into this 2BR Ranch! Updated kitchen stainless steel appliances & newer cabinets, opens to the dining room and family room. Hardwood floors throughout. Walk to park, pool and school!  
**Brent Bowman | 860-305-8904**



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Cris Walsh  
860-214-5964



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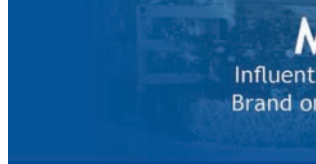
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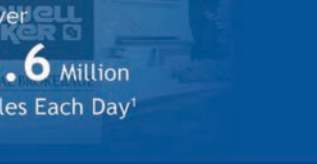
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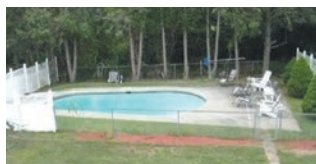
Chris Devanney  
860-760-3640



Pamela Ste. Jean  
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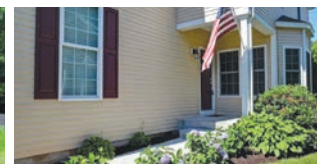
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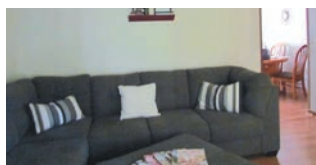
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**Rocky Hill | \$499,000 | G10201944 | 54 Andover Dr**  
4BR/2+BA spacious Contemporary/Colonial w superior floor plan geared to large scale entertaining & family life style. 2 fireplaces, deck. JUST UPDATED: New Floor/Carpet and fresh paint upstairs!  
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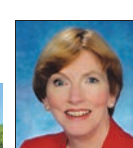
**Rocky Hill | \$249,900 | G10230735 | 561 Old Main St**  
Spacious 3BR/2+BA Raised Ranch. Large, updated kitchen with a generous amount of cabinet/counter space, table space and a breakfast bar. Family room w/ a corner fireplace. Hardwood. 2 Car garage.  
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**Rocky Hill | \$224,900 | G10233865 | 2680 Main St**  
Sunny, charm-filled 7 room Colonial! Features an extra large living room w/ a bay window, fireplace with gas logs and built-ins. The kitchen has a generous amount of oak cabinetry & counter space.  
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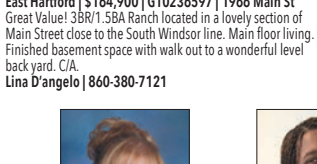
**Newington | \$344,900 | G10235610 | 30 Chaplin St #30**  
Gorgeous 3BD Townhouse by Toll Brothers is a stunning departure from the ordinary! Open Concept w/ spectacular kitchen has maple cabinetry, granite countertops, & new high end appls. 2 car garage.  
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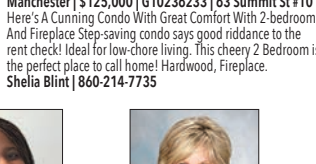
Sara Felter  
860-573-8008



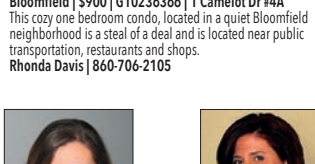
Lorna Purrier  
860-869-4924



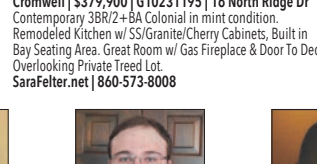
**East Hartford | \$164,900 | G10236597 | 1966 Main St**  
Great Value! 3BR/1.5BA Ranch located in a lovely section of Main Street close to the South Windsor line. Main floor living. Finished basement space with walk out to a wonderful level back yard. C/A.  
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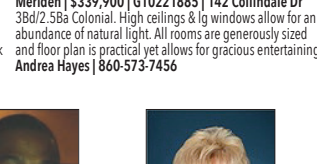
**Manchester | \$125,000 | G10236233 | 63 Summit St #10**  
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**Bloomfield | \$900 | G10236366 | 1 Camelot Dr #4A**  
This cozy one bedroom condo, located in a quiet Bloomfield neighborhood is a steal of a deal and is located near public transportation, restaurants and shops.  
**Rhonda Davis | 860-706-2105**



**Cromwell | \$379,900 | G10231195 | 16 North Ridge Dr**  
Contemporary 3BR/2+BA Colonial in mint condition. Remodeled Kitchen w/ SS/Granite/Cherry Cabinets, Built in Bay Seating Area. Great Room w/ Gas Fireplace & Door To Deck Overlooking Private Treed Lot.  
**SaraFelter.net | 860-573-8008**



**Meriden | \$339,900 | G10221885 | 142 Collindale Dr**  
3BD/2.5BA Colonial. High ceilings & lg windows allow for an abundance of natural light. All rooms are generously sized and floor plan is practical yet allows for gracious entertaining.  
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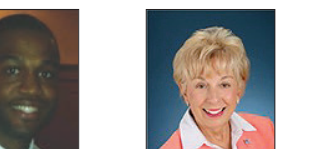
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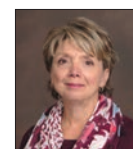
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# rocky hill LIFE

**August 2017**

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## QUOTE OF NOTE:

“We’re starting to see in the last couple of years a lot of younger people getting into the sport.” - *Mike Cinciripino*

See story page 12

## ON THE COVER

EMT Dave Motowidiak and EMT Kate Stewart work together on training night.

Photo by Lisa Brisson  
See story page 16

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## Dining Destination



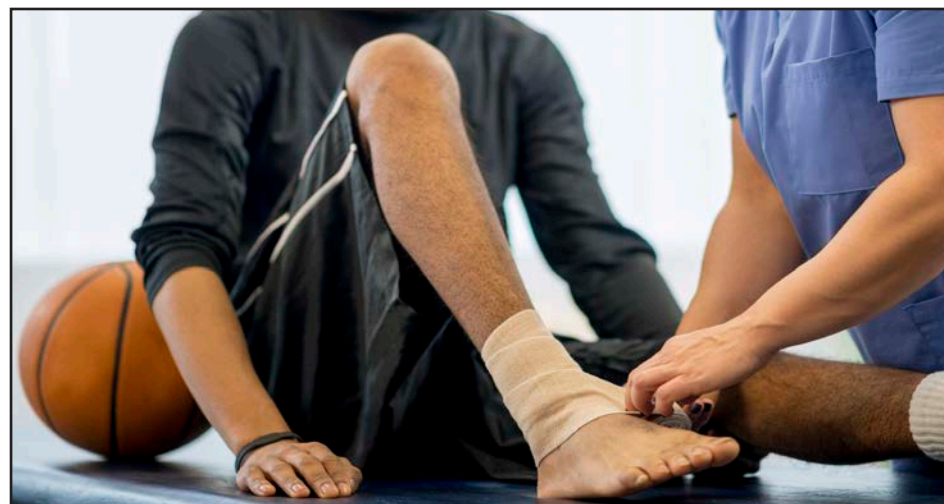
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# Summer reading

Program is running at full force

Photos by Allie Rivera



One of the first prizes students are eligible to receive for participating in summer reading is a drawstring backpack.

by Allie Rivera  
Staff Writer

**S**chool may be out for summer, but all across town, students of all ages are continuing their education.

As in summers past, the Rocky Hill Public Schools has partnered with the Cora J. Belden Library to provide a wide variety of resources and activities to supplement its summer reading program.

"We always try to have something for every age group and for different interests," Children's Librarian Cathy Potter said. "We've actually got programs that are full already because there's been so much interest."

Potter and others at the library have already seen an uptick in interest from previous years. As of mid-July, 444 elementary-aged students had already registered and read 3,525 books while 135 teenagers had registered, logging more than 70,000 minutes of reading.

"I would say summer reading is going full force this year," Potter said. "The teens have already surpassed all of last year's total."

To create interest in summer reading, before the season even

began staff members of the library were beginning to publicize the programs. Reference/Teen Librarian Mike Murphy visited classrooms at Griswold Middle School as well as fifth-graders at West Hill and Stevens schools to talk about upcoming library events.

"We've got our Maker Camps, we've got game design, we're doing Pokemon Go safaris, WiiU gaming," Murphy said. "We've already had a ton of kids sign up."

Most of the summer reading

builder programs and coding programs for kids and teens."

In addition to playing off the theme's building motif, Potter, Murphy and others at the library are trying to spread kindness throughout the community.

"We're trying to take it to another level with the theme," Potter said. "I just think it's important to build a better community."

The library has created an Acts of Kindness wall where people can find envelopes with ideas to spread

kindness to the Connecticut Science Center.

While the library works in conjunction with Rocky Hill Public Schools on summer reading, each of the four schools in town additionally has its own approach and requirements. Students at the elementary level are encouraged to read at least five books over the vacation period.

"Usually many of them do more," K-12 Language Arts Coordinator Mary Schaefer said.

Each school offers different incentives to the students to encourage their reading. Jason Maziarz, principal of Stevens School, promises to have lunch with students who succeed in the challenge.

Drawing inspiration from the children's book "Miss Nelson is Missing," West Hill Principal Scott Nozik is planning a larger event for students who go above and beyond in the reading challenge.

"Those who read a certain number of books will get to go on a scavenger hunt to find Mr. Nozik," Schaefer said.

Students at the middle school are given a list of books from which to choose, while at the high school, students are tasked with picking any one book of their desire. Upon

**"We're always trying to build better readers."**

**– Cathy Potter**

activities fall into the theme presented each year by the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge, a statewide initiative to have children continue reading throughout the summer by logging their activity. The district has been participating in the challenge for years. This summer's theme is Building a Better World.

"We're trying to build off of that and do some creative programs," Potter said. "We're running some

kindness. It also started a snack drive encouraging people to donate.

"There are kids that normally in school would get a snack during the day but during the summer they may not have that," Potter said.

Those who participate in summer reading at the library have the opportunity to win prizes, ranging from a drawstring backpack with a logo designed by Rocky Hill High School student Brendan Aube to a



returning to school in the fall, they will participate in in-depth discussions on their reading.

"It's a great way for the kids to have these conversations," Schaefer said. "You'll see these kids really talking up these books that they've read and making suggestions to each other."

For both Schaefer and Potter, summer reading is about more than simply getting children to read while away from school.

"We're always trying to build better readers," Potter said.

"Reading is a really important skill for kids. It's something they're going to need for the rest of their life," Schaefer said.

"You really want students to enjoy reading. It improves critical thinking, increases vocabulary, there are so many benefits for students." **RHL**



As part of the Cora J. Belden Library's Summer Reading programs, students from the public school district can participate in free programs on coding and video game design. Shalini Garikiparthi, 11, watches a tutorial while Reference/Teen Librarian Mike Murphy helps another student.

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# Point of contention

Replacing the town manager turns into lengthy partisan struggle

by Mark Jahne  
Editor

**I**t has been more than nine months since former town manager Guy Scaife left town employment to take a position in Middletown. The Town Council has not yet had any luck appointing a replacement and the process is now mired in partisan politics.

Scaife moved on this past September and longtime town finance director John Mehr was named town manager on an interim basis. The majority Democrats

would like to officially appoint him to the position but Republicans have raised questions about the process and the town charter.

The charter states clearly that a town manager can only be terminated or suspended by a minimum of six votes of the nine-member council. But Scaife was not fired or suspended; he resigned. Mayor Claudia Baio, a Democrat, said it is unclear what the requirement is to appoint a new manager upon a resignation.

"Under our charter, in certain circumstances, a town manager needs to be retained within six months" of the previous manager's departure, she said.

A legal opinion was sought from Town Attorney Jack Bradley of the law firm Rome McGuigan, and Baio said his response was that the 180-day time requirement was not mandatory in this case. The mayor appointed a three-person subcommittee of council members to conduct a town manager search: Democrats

John Emanuel and Joseph Kochanek and Republican Cathy Vargas.

They solicited applicants to serve as a consultant in the process. They also advertised for candidates for the position and more than 70 applications were received. The subcommittee then decided to scrap the idea of hiring a consultant.

The full council took a vote a few months ago and appointed Mehr to the position on a party-line vote with all five Democrats in favor and all four Republicans opposed.

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**“It very clearly says in the charter that you need a super majority of six votes.”**

**– Minority Leader Henry Vassel**



File photos

**“Under our charter, in certain circumstances, a town manager needs to be retained within six months.”**

**– Mayor Claudia Baio**



Democrat William O’Sullivan raised the question of five versus six votes as a procedural matter. The GOP councilors then questioned the legal interpretation of the charter and contended that six council votes are needed, regardless of the details

involved in Scaife’s departure.

“We spent thousands of dollars on legal opinions, only to have the councilor who raised the issue change his mind,” Minority Leader and immediate past mayor Henry Vassel said.

“It very clearly says in the charter that you need a super majority of six votes” to appoint a town manager, he added.

Baio said she didn’t know for certain that it would be a 5-4 outcome when she called for a vote.

“There was a lot of public comment,” she recalled. “We, on our side, felt there was a legitimate argument that the decision was sound.”

O’Sullivan then moved to rescind the vote and reconsider the appointment, which the council did.

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## Excerpts from the town charter

### Section 412

#### Removals and Suspensions

The Council shall have the power by six (6) affirmative votes of its membership, by resolution, in its sole discretion, with or without cause, to remove or suspend the Town Manager, and shall have the power by majority of the full membership in its sole discretion and for whatever cause it shall deem sufficient to remove or suspend by resolution any person appointed by the Council to any other office or position.

### Section 501

#### Appointment, Qualification and Tenure

The Town Manager shall be appointed and may be removed or suspended by the Council by at least six (6) affirmative votes of the membership of the Council. The Town Manager shall be the chief executive officer of the Town to serve at the pleasure of the Council for an indefinite term and who shall be chosen exclusively on the basis of their executive and administrative qualifications, character, education, professional training and experience. At the time of their appointment, they need not be a resident of the Town or State, but during the tenure of office, they shall reside within the Town. The Council shall set a time limit wherein the Town Manager will become a resident of the Town. The Town Manager shall devote their full time to the duties of the office.

### Section 504

#### Acting Town Manager

In the event that the Town Manager's temporary absence prevents or limits his or her normal business engagement, the Town Manager shall designate an Acting Town Manager, subject to the rights of the Town Council to override that selection by resolution appointing an Acting Town Manager of the Council's choice, other than a Council member. In the event the Town Manager is suspended or terminated, the Council shall appoint an Acting Town Manager by resolution other than a council member, and a permanent Town Manager shall be appointed within 180 days of said resolution. The Acting Town Manager shall have all the powers and duties of the Town Manager.

He also pledged that, since he had raised the issue that caused all the contention, he would abstain from participating if another vote on Mehr was held.

That leaves the council in a 4-4 deadlock.

All of this happened in the middle of the annual debate over crafting a municipal budget. In the meantime, Mehr retains the interim title. Baio praised his work on the budget as well as maintaining the town's high rating with the major municipal credit agencies.

Vasel said Scaife resigned under pressure after the Democrats took over control of the council in the last municipal election in 2015.

The previous Republican-dominated Town Council hired Scaife after long-time town manager Barbara Gilbert retired.

"My problem is not with John Mehr, but with the process outlined by the Democratic majority,"

Vasel said. "I was never allowed to be part of the process, part of the selection."

He said that when applicants were brought in for interviews he was told he could only ask them one question each.

Vasel said hiring a town manager is an important task because he or she is the person who oversees a \$70 million municipal budget.

Baio appointed a new subcommittee consisting of Deputy Mayor Kochanek, Democrat Anthony LaRosa and Republican Frank Szeps. This group may revisit the consultant issue and continues to meet as this debate winds its way through the political process.

In the meantime, Mehr will continue to serve as the acting town manager, giving the Democrats in effect the person they want at the helm for an indefinite period of time, Vasel said. **RHL**



# Mentor Writers Week

CREC school demonstrates how writing affects everyone

by Allie Rivera

Staff Writer

A variety of visitors came into the classroom recently at the CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering Elementary School to provide a fresh perspective on future careers.

Now in its fourth year, the magnet school serves students in kinder-

garten through third grade, with fourth grade classes being incorporated next year and fifth grade the year after that.

"We infuse science, technology, engineering and math into everything we do," Principal Gayle Hills said.

Knowing that most of her students hold an interest in those core STEM areas, third grade teacher Amanda Caron discovered that for many of them, writing was not as high of a priority.

"They were writing, but they didn't really find the purpose for it," she said. "I wanted the kids to know that writing is not just something we do in school, it's something that everyone has to do in all careers."

Hoping to address this concern, Caron came up with the idea for Mentor Writers Week, an entire week in which each day had visitors come to the classroom to explain how writing is used within their careers.

When she brought her idea to Hills and her fellow third grade teachers, she was met with great enthusiasm.

"Everyone thought it was a great idea," Caron said. "Mrs. Hills is so open and accommodating for everyone. She was even willing to step in and be one of the presenters if we needed it."

Caron began reaching out to parents to see if anyone would volunteer to go in and speak to the class, but before she even sent out her first message, she knew she already had one speaker lined up – her husband, Matt, a reporter for WWLP Channel 22 News in Springfield, Mass.

"A lot of times, kids watch TV and see the person with the microphone talking and they think that's all they do, but I wanted to show them there's a lot more that goes into it," Matt said.

He spoke to the four third grade classes about his work and orga-

nized a chance for them to try reporting themselves.

"Being a good news reporter isn't just about the story you write," he told the students sitting on the floor before him. "It's about knowing what questions to ask."

Each student was provided with a paper on which to take notes as they questioned him on a "fictional" news story of a monkey escaping its zoo enclosure. Students asked him questions about how the monkey got out of its home, how long it had been missing and what the zookeepers were doing to get him back.

"I just wanted them to be curious, because that's what being a news reporter is all about," he said.

Once students had asked their questions, they were tasked with writing a story that included all their details.

"I asked what type of weather it was and how long it was out, then I wrote about the monkey and how it escaped," 8-year-old Makayla



Photos by Allie Rivera

Third-grader Megan Murphy, 9, read her news report about an escaped monkey during an exercise for Mentor Writers Week.

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Larrieux said.

"I liked when we were doing it and we got to ask Mr. Caron all these questions," Megan Murphy, 9, added.

Once students were finished, Matt chose a couple of students to read their reports in front of the class as though they were reading for television, including holding a Channel 22 microphone.

"The most powerful tool in the business," he said as he handed it over to a student.

Following their reports, students discovered that the "fictional" story they had been tasked to write was one that had actually happened. They were able to watch the video of him covering the story.

"That was cool to see the video," 9-year-old Landon Gawel said.

Throughout the rest of the week, students were able to learn from a variety of speakers about how writing is used in their careers, ranging from sports writers and technical editors to scientists.

"They're really learning the importance of writing," Amanda said. "I wanted them to know there

are other careers out there for them to pursue."

Hills considers providing these opportunities in the schools beneficial not only for the students who gain a new perspective, but also for the family and friends who are able to come in and see the work that is being done.

"It was nice to have some of our family and friends come in," she said. "We're always looking for ways to inspire the children to write and this is a great way for them to think about what they want to do in the future."

Calling this first Mentor Writers Week a success, Amanda said she is hoping to host the week again in the future.

"Year by year it will depend on the parents, but I think this is a really relevant way to get kids prepared for the world today," she said. **RHL**

**Matt Caron, a reporter at Channel 22 News in Springfield, Mass., addressed third-graders at the CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering Elementary School during the inaugural Mentor Writers Week.**



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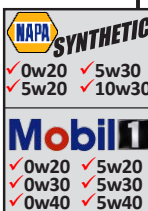
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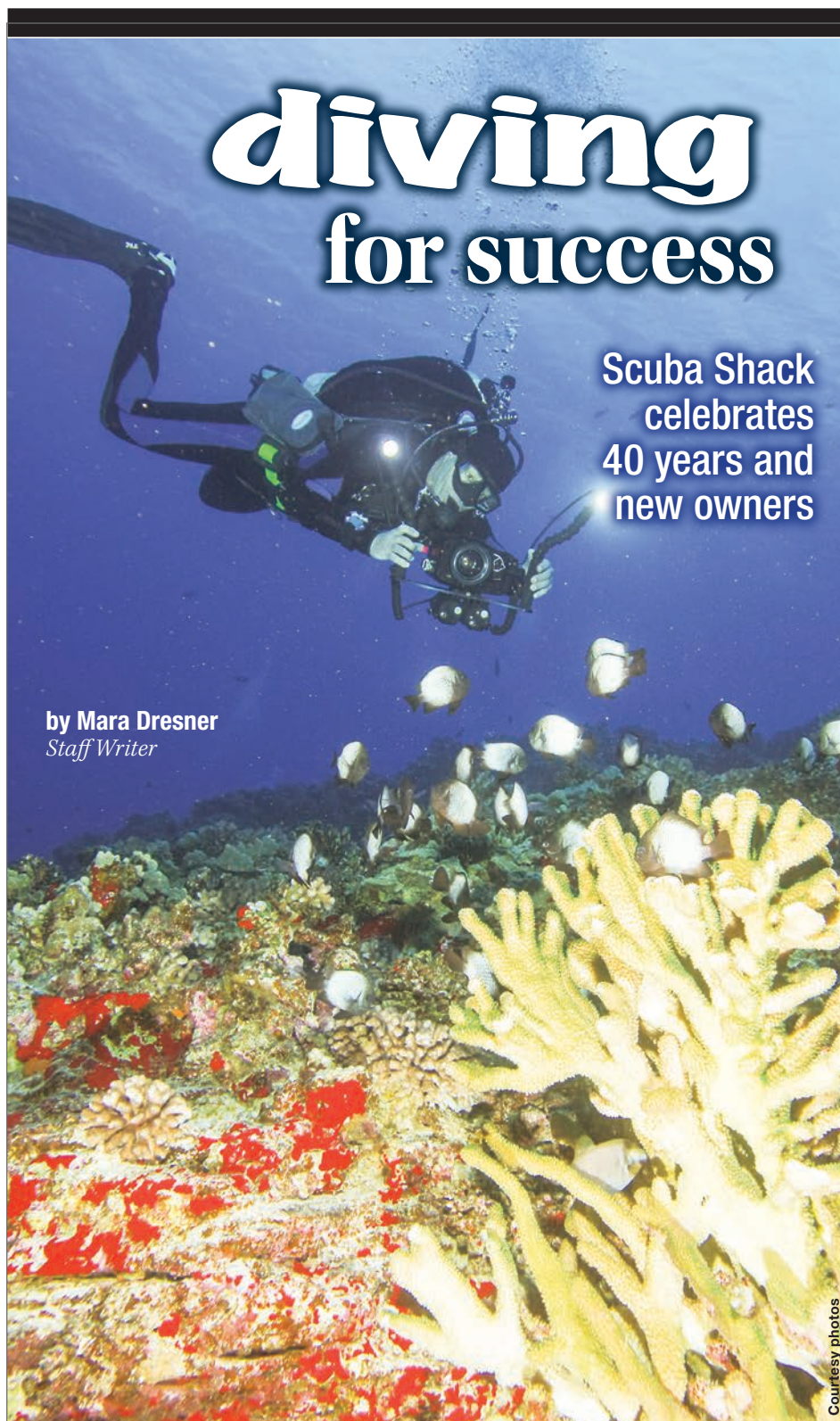


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# diving for success

Scuba Shack celebrates 40 years and new owners

by Mara Dresner  
 Staff Writer



Courtesy photos

Jeff Cinciripino, co-owner of the Scuba Shack in Rocky Hill and a PADI instructor, dives at Molokini Crater, Hawaii.

The first night Jeff Cinciripino took an open water class at the Scuba Shack in Rocky Hill, he told the instructor that one day he wanted to own a dive shop and he wanted his son, Matt, to run it.

"I just laughed and didn't take it seriously. Even the instructor and owner didn't take it seriously," Donna Cinciripino, Jeff's wife, recalled. "I remember him saying it, never thinking it would be this shop."

That dream became a reality this year when the Cinciripinos,

who all live in Glastonbury, formed a partnership with Monty Fitzpatrick of Wethersfield and purchased the Scuba Shack from Ed Hayes. Matt was the first in his family to start diving, getting his feet wet on a family vacation.

"He loved it. He raved about it for months afterwards," Donna said.

The following year, both Jeff and Matt got certified, followed by Donna.

"Initially [I got certified] because they were going to travel to all these wonderful places and I was either going to get certified or I



was going to be staying home. Then I saw my first seahorse [while diving] and after that I was hooked," she said.

She's been certified since 2004 and estimates she's done more than 500 dives.

"It's a feeling of just floating. It feels like you're in midair, yet you know there's 30, 40 feet below you. It's very relaxing, very peaceful, very quiet. There are no telephones ringing," she said.

The partners bring a wide variety of skills to the business. Donna is a certified nurse assistant with a heavy background in customer service. Jeff works for the Travelers and has a financial and military background; you'll find him at the shop evenings and weekends.

"We all have a different skill set coming in. I think this wouldn't work so well if we didn't have all four of us. My customer service set helps. Matthew has been working in the store for two years. He knows the stuff in and out. He's been teaching me with lots of patience. We couldn't have done this without him; it's been a god-send," Donna said.

"Monty, our business partner, he's been a professional diver for over 20 years. He's one of two PADI [Professional Association of Diving Instructors] course directors in Connecticut.

He teaches the instructors who teach everyone else.

"That's the highest you can get in the PADI organization without actually working for PADI. My husband handles the recreational part of the diving and all the financial stuff."

Fitzpatrick has been diving for more than four decades.

"My father owned a commercial diving operation. I worked for him when I was younger, about 10. I was forced child labor," he said with a laugh.

"I would work during the summer. I knew how to rip and strip a compressor head before I was 20 years old. For me, it was a treat. For him, it was cheap labor."

He never thought he'd own a

dive shop.

"I'd gone over it a few times in my head, but it just never fell into my career path. About 10 years ago, I looked at buying this place, and my friend Ed Hayes ended up buying it. Ten years later, I decided it was time to buy it," he said. "I think I made a wonderful investment."

He added there's a lot to love under the sea.

"The calmness, the serenity, the adventure, going into unknown, kind of two conflicting dichotic emotions," he said.

He also loves to teach.

"There are many standards and procedures we have to adhere to, but I like to let my students explore on their own within those safety limits. I like to let them make mistakes within safety limits. I'm a Socratic type of instructor. I teach more by asking questions," he said.

The Scuba Shack became certified to teach public safety instructors, such as police and fire dive teams, in 2012. He said it is the only facility in New England qualified to do this.

"Public safety divers generally are little more regimented. I'm a former military officer so I can fall into that role pretty quickly. It allows

me to teach both sides of the fence," Fitzpatrick said.

Donna said the shop attracts a variety of people.

"A lot of people say, 'I always wanted to try it. I drive by your shop every day.' We do get a fair amount of policemen and firemen, but it's mostly recreational," she said.

"You get a lot of young people and a lot of people whose kids have just left the nest and now have disposable income. I didn't start until I was 45. I thought I was too old to start."

The minimum age to dive is 10.

"We find that 12 is a better age. A lot of kids have trouble understanding the science behind it at 10. As long as you don't have health restrictions that prohibit it, anyone can learn to dive," Donna said.

**We're starting to see in the last couple of years a lot of younger people getting into the sport."**

**– Matt Cinciripino**

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Donna Cinciripino, her son Matt and her husband Jeff, pose for a photo at Marriott Reef, Ka'anapali Beach, Maui, Hawaii. The three purchased the Scuba Shack in Rocky Hill earlier this year with partner Monty Fitzpatrick of Wethersfield.



They're finding a renewed interest in people wanting to learn the sport.

"There was a down dip. Now we're getting a new generation of divers. We're starting to see in the last couple of years a lot of younger people getting into the sport," Matt said.

"It's kind of an interesting profession. All the people doing it have been doing it for 30, 40 years. Now we're getting people who are just getting into it, who get the bug, which is nice. The last couple of years diving had been a contracting industry."

The Scuba Shack was originally founded in 1977 by Bill Roe, who left a full-time job to establish Scuba Shack of Connecticut, LTD. The grand opening was held that May at the store's original location at 1839 Silas Deane Highway.

It moved to 1845 Silas Deane Highway in 1981 and to its present location at 1765 Silas Deane Highway in 1982.

"[Scuba] hasn't changed a lot in the 10 years I've been involved. I've been hearing stories from the previous owners. They've been able to tell us stories about the way things have changed. The equipment has evolved immensely. It's much safer than it used to be," Donna said.

"Going back really far to 'Sea Hunt' and Lloyd Bridges, the equipment they used then,

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there was only one regulator mouth-piece to breathe through. Today everyone has two, one for you and one for your buddy. It's all about redundancy."

The store held an open house May 13 to celebrate the anniversary and included the previous owners and divers from the past 40 years. Donna enjoys working with the public.

"The customers that come in, they're always happy. They're either deciding to dive and coming in for the first time or they're booking a trip. They're always happy when they come in here. It's very nice to be around happy people," she said.

William Blumenthal of Southington enjoys the atmosphere.

"It's a family kind of environment," he said. "The whole diving sport is a community. It's a friendly, relaxed, enjoyable kind of a thing. There's enough risk to it to forget about your day-to-day grind and have to have some fun along the way."

While many people think of scuba as something to be done in

exotic places, Donna said you can find places to dive everywhere.

"There's diving all up and down the Atlantic coast. There's dive spots in every state," she said.

While they have an October trip planned for Grand Cayman, the Scuba Shack also leads diving excursions to places such as Gloucester, Lake George and Rhode Island.

Whether you're planning a big trip or just want to do the occasional dive, she said that Scuba Shack can help.

"No matter what your diving interest is – recreational, technical, cave diving – we have instructors that can teach you and can service all your gear," Donna said.

"Scuba Shack is a little bit different. We have been really molded by the people who have come before us, taken the diving discipline in a different direction. We have taken a lot of our style from the technical side of things, cave diving or very deep diving," Matt said.

"Basically we pull our focus from people doing the toughest stuff and bring that down to the recreational

level. That's our training ethos. The last owner, Ed, was instrumental in evolving diving that way. That's a little bit different and I think very unique, particularly in this region."

Every dive shares one characteristic.

"You get to inject a little bit of adventure into your day-to-day life," Matt said. **RHL**

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Several past and present owners of Scuba Shack gathered May 13 to celebrate the company's 40th anniversary including, from left, Monty Fitzpatrick, Tom and Alicia Misenti, founder Bill Roe, Jeff Cinciripino, Donna Cinciripino and Matt Cinciripino.

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# Ready to roll

Rocky Hill Volunteer Ambulance Association provides skilled medical response

by Mark Jahne  
Editor

**W**hen the alarm sounds, they are ready and waiting to help. The volunteers who provide emergency medical services to residents on nights and weekends dedicate themselves to saving lives and assisting those in need.

"We have three trucks altogether, but we use two on nights and weekends," Chief Joseph Grayeb said.

He is in his fifth year as chief. He is supported by two assistant chiefs and two deputy chiefs.

The membership elects its leaders to three-year terms. A retired state motor vehicles inspector, Grayeb works as a part-time police

officer in Ellington.

The volunteer emergency medical technicians are on duty from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Monday through Friday and 24 hours on Saturday and Sunday.

Aetna Ambulance provides daytime EMT coverage Monday through Friday and also provides 24/7 paramedic services under contract with RHVAA and the town. It also is the backup for any calls that come in when both RHVAA ambulances are deployed on emergency calls.

EMT Christina Mendoza enters patient information into a Toughbook laptop computer.



Photos by Mark Jahne

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"It works out great," Grayeb said. "We average a seven-minute response time."

Unlike firefighters, ambulance volunteers do not respond from home. They serve assigned shifts at ambulance headquarters on Main Street and can immediately jump aboard an ambulance and head to the scene when a call comes in.

Emergency medical calls are initiated by the same dispatchers who handle police and fire calls. Police officers – who also have emergency medical training – are usually sent to any medical emergency because they are already on the road and will likely get there prior to the arrival of the ambulance crew to initiate treatment.

Grayeb said membership in RHVAA has fluctuated between 50 and 70 over the years.

It currently stands at 60. "We just got seven new people who joined during the past couple of months," he said proudly.

He spoke of a former member who went on to become a physician. That's just one example of how people use this volunteer opportunity to further their careers and/or community service.

Many of the volunteers are nursing and medical students. Others want to secure jobs in career fire departments and still others represent a wide variety of careers.

"One of the founding members was an attorney," Grayeb said.

One recent evening the first ambulance was staffed by Grayeb and EMT Christina Mendoza. Tim Halligan and Nick Pytel were also at headquarters to serve aboard the second rig.



Chief Joseph Grayeb makes sure the stretcher and all related equipment are aboard the ambulance.



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**“We’re a separate entity from the town. We pay for all of our members’ training, uniforms and equipment.”**

**– Chief Joseph Grayeb**



Pictured are, from left, EMT Nick Pytel, Chief Joseph Grayeb, Assistant Chief Bryant Goodrich and EMT Christina Mendoza.

“We have scheduled crews for both ambulances,” the chief said.

Grayeb said everyone wants the chance to drive the truck with its siren and flashing lights but his belief is that this can wait. While it is an important part of the job, it’s not the primary role of an EMT.

“I want good, skilled people in the back of the truck” working with the patients on their way to the hospital, he said.

The back area has a wheeled stretcher that loads along an electronic track and locks into place. The ambulance is stocked with a wide supply of medical gear ranging from bandages to bottles of oxygen.

If the situation calls for it, a paramedic will ride with the volunteer EMTs and the patient to the hospital because he or she is licensed to provide a higher level of emergent care. The crew will bring that paramedic back to the emergency scene to pick up his or her vehicle.

The first order of business this particular evening was to go buy some dinner at a local market. This writer opted for a sandwich and bottle of lemonade because one of the many corollaries of Murphy’s Law is

that anyone connected to emergency response will receive an alarm as soon as they sit down to a hot meal, such as the food the chief bought for his colleagues.

Within moments after returning to headquarters and starting to eat, the evening’s first alarm came in.

A woman who resides at a local skilled nursing facility had fallen and sustained a blow to the head.

This is what is termed a “hot” call, meaning police and ambulance personnel respond as quickly as possible with lights and siren to help clear the way.

They are still required to follow the rules of the road and must stop at any red lights to scan the intersection for safety before proceeding.

The woman was standing up and being attended to by a nurse upon arrival. The paramedic was also dispatched. The patient had no visible injuries but was transported to the hospital because of concern that she might have internal bleeding on the brain.

Grayeb and Mendoza stayed with her until the hospital took full control of her care. Mendoza, who works as a home health aid as well

as in a Hartford restaurant, later spoke about her commitment to RHVAA.

“I’ve been here for over seven years now,” she said.

Mendoza, who is studying to become a nurse, enjoys taking care of people in a time of medical need and the fact that almost all of the calls are emergencies and test her skills. She also finds the family atmosphere within the membership of the ambulance association valuable to her life.

She added that she uses the example of her own volunteerism to teach her children the value and importance of giving back to the community. One does not need to live in Rocky Hill to join the ambulance corps.

There was just enough time after returning to headquarters for everyone to finish their dinner. Then another alarm came in for a man in his 90s who had fallen in his home. This was another hot response.

EMTs and paramedics arrived to find him lying on the floor in significant pain with a deep gash to the head and a leg injury that they surmised was either a broken femur or

fractured hip.

Initial treatment was provided in his bedroom before they used a two-piece special metal basket that snaps together to carry him down the stairs to the ambulance stretcher on wheels that was waiting outside.

They transported him to the hospital, with the paramedic and Grayeb providing continuing treatment during the ride, and handed him off to the care of the emergency room staff.

On the way back to town Grayeb talked about what it means to be a Rocky Hill volunteer EMT. The town provides insurance if they are injured while on the job as well as a tax abatement on their property taxes – for those members who live in town – of \$1,000.

Those who serve a certain number of years also earn a small pension. Town government gives RHVAA \$10,000 each year for operating expenses and Grayeb said any remaining funds are returned to the town.

The town also pays 70 percent of the Aetna paramedic contract; RHVAA pays the remaining 30 percent. Money is always an issue for



these volunteers. A new ambulance costs at least \$160,000 and town government does not pay for this.

"We purchased the last six ambulances and it cost the town no money," Grayeb said. "We're a separate entity from the town. We pay for all of our members' training, uniforms and equipment."

Residents Martin Stillman, Thomas Gross and Ralph Houlihan first discussed forming the Rocky Hill Volunteer Ambulance Association back in 1971 and 1972. It was incorporated April 9, 1973, with Stillman as president, Gross as vice president and Houlihan as treasurer.

John Francis was secretary and the other members of the board of directors were Brad Warner, William Pierson, Mary Roche, John Kilroy and Robert Huntoon. They started out by purchasing a 1970 Cadillac ambulance for \$7,500.

Actual service to residents began that September with 15 riding members running the ambulance out of the old fire station on Church Street. They answered 185 calls for

service over the first 12 months.

RHVAA moved in 1975 to the old police building at Main and Forest streets. By 1983 the organization had advanced to an intermediate level of care, one of the first volunteer ambulance corps in the state to do so.

Next came a paramedic care license and that was in 1990. The Rocky Hill members were the first volunteer emergency medical service in the state to be certified at that level. A contract was signed with Professional Ambulance Service to provide the paramedics.

By 1995 an additional two ambulances had been purchased. In 1997 RHVAA was running three ambulances with a membership of 43 and responded to 850 emergency calls that calendar year.

Today finds the association housed in a section of Fire Station 3, which also serves as fire department and ambulance headquarters, at the intersection of Main Street and Old Forge Road.

The local volunteers now have a total of seven vehicles at their dis-

posal: three ambulances, one paramedic vehicle, a utility all-terrain vehicle, a staff vehicle and the chief's vehicle. It is funded by billing the insurance companies of the people it treats and transports, as well as by donations.

Part of the donation income is put toward a scholarship fund for students who are pursuing a medically related career. RHVAA does not perform non-emergency transports between skilled nursing facilities, hospitals and physician offices. Its primary focus is on medical emergencies and it responded to 1,356 in calendar year 2016.

Some shifts are quiet and others only have one call. Every day is different.

"We've gone 12 calls deep in an hour," Grayeb said.

The majority are either emergencies involving elderly people or car crashes. That includes I-91 if the collision happens on the portion of highway that passes through town.

They also frequently support the fire department at emergency scenes, treating both firefighters and

the general public.

"Any working structure fire, we send two ambulances," the chief said.

He praised the level of cooperation RHVAA enjoys with police officers and firefighters and for the commitment all three agencies have to the town.

"They're top notch and they really care," Grayeb said.

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer emergency medical technician is encouraged to contact RHVAA for a training class that begins July 31 and continues through Oct. 30. It will meet on Mondays and Saturdays.

A total of 170 hours of classroom instruction are required before one can become a state-certified emergency medical technician. Certification also requires successful completion of both practical and written examinations.

New EMTs ride along for a period of time as observers in a field training program. [RHL](#)

To learn more visit [rhvaa.com](http://rhvaa.com) or see its Facebook page.

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# From the Mayor's Desk Reflecting upon mayors past and present

by Claudia Baio

Some months ago I had the opportunity to host a roundtable of former Rocky Hill mayors. We had almost 100 percent participation with only one unable to attend, but who did still accept my invitation to provide some input and responses to the questions that we shared. The late Barbara Surwilo was represented by her daughter, Lisa Dunnery.

This month's column is dedicated to all those former Rocky Hill mayors, volunteer public servants who have given their time to serve our town and lead their respective councils. The gathering included the two longest-tenured mayors, Donald Unwin and Tony LaRosa, and the youngest mayor, Todd Cusano.

We were also joined by State Rep. Tony Guerrero, who started out as a mayor, as well as former mayors Mike Bocchini and Timothy Moriarty. Henry Vassel was unable to attend.

I had asked each in advance to prepare a short response for sharing towards the end of our evening. The time flew by with wonderful stories. Each shared their responses to the questions I had posed: what was one of their greatest accomplishments, one thing that rises to the top of

something about which they are most proud from their tenure as mayor, what was one of their greatest challenges and what advice do they have for the future.

There were some general themes that seem to continue throughout the leadership timeline, including both the challenges and advancements, fits and starts, related to the foundry. These dated back to Guerrero and Bocchini.

Cusano jokingly noted that the foundry may have skipped a generation during his tenure, given the waves that were encountered on both sides of his administration. LaRosa noted the ceremonial breaking of the wall at the foundry that showed the first huge step forward in the continuing goal of development.

The challenge of dealing with budget issues, the difficult budget process, balancing competing interests of the various departments and community needs versus stabilizing the mill rate also was a consistent theme throughout administrations.

Many cited some component of the budget process and their ability to stabilize, keep in check, responsibly lead the charge to establish a budget that made sense for the time.

Consistent challenges include balancing the needs of our communi-

ty, the hardest seemed to be and continues to be balancing the needs of our two largest community groups, our senior population and our school-aged population, remaining progressive and providing good solid services while making efforts for each component of the population.

Many shared the challenges of dealing with certain sensitive town-related issues that might arise from time to time and required truly focusing, trying to build consensus and finding common ground in particular when individual members might be entrenched in their position; not an easy task.

Interestingly, some things that remain on our radar scene including tightening our housing code, making our town and buildings more green, keeping the vision for development uniform, longer-term planning for capital improvements and preventing the overabundance or improper balance of apartments.

Unwin shared one of his proudest moments that occurred during his first term, the purchase of Quarry Hill Ridge, which came after a many year battle and concerns relating to development. He recalled that they had a small window of opportunity to purchase the property.

Moriarty noted with pride the

plaque for the Vietnam War veterans. Cusano referred to WFSB making Rocky Hill its home. He recounted that we had initially lost Channel 3 to Hartford but then they came back and became part of our community.

Dunnery shared some of her mother's accomplishments which included her efforts to prevent I-291 coming through Rocky Hill, preserving open space and speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Guerrera noted the need for open government and to talk across the aisle. Unwin and Moriarty echoed that sentiment by including in their advice to respect the difference of opinion and try to find common ground. Some other bits of advice included remembering to put decisions over politics, not acting simply to try to make someone look bad, and trying not to take things personally.

The conversation fueled my desire to ensure that our former mayors remain involved and engaged in some fashion and appreciated for their contributions. It is for that reason that I've also invited each of them to participate in the planning of the 175th anniversary of the town that will be celebrated next year and for which the planning has commenced already. **RHL**

**1.** Third-graders at Stevens School took a day trip to Ferry Park to learn more about local history from representatives of the Rocky Hill Historical Society.

**2.** A lively group attended Coffee with the Mayor at the new Starbucks on Cromwell Avenue the morning of June 17.

**3.** Students at Stevens School created these wildlife posters.

**4.** Mayor Claudia Baio hosted a dinner gathering of former mayors to share their thoughts and experiences. They are, standing from left, Lisa Dunnery (daughter of the late Barbara Surwilo), Todd Cusano, Tony LaRosa and Mike Bocchini; seated, Tony Guerrero, Baio, Timothy Moriarty and Donald Unwin.



Courtesy photos



## Living *your Best LIFE*

# Coogans stay active and happy

by Allie Rivera  
Staff Writer

**L**ife after retirement has only gotten better for Wendell and Susan Coogan. Married in 1968, the two have lived in their home on Bayberry Lane since 1973.

“We love living here. We love our neighbors,” Wendell said. “Everyone cooperates with each other.”

“We do kind of help each other out,” Susan added. “If there’s a big snow storm, the first guy out usually does the other driveways as well.”

Both retired since 1992, Wendell formerly worked as a district school administrator in Wethersfield while Susan worked for the state Department of Transportation for 28 years.



Photo by Mark Jahne

Susan and Wendell Coogan stay healthy and happy by playing tennis.

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## Living your Best LIFE

"Our goal is to be retired longer than we worked," Wendell said with a laugh.

"I'm getting close," Susan added.

They remain active with both personal activities and volunteer work, something which they said they are glad to have more time to do.

"That's something that we did not really get to do before we retired," Susan said.

After retirement, the couple volunteered with Meals on Wheels, delivering hot meals to homebound senior citizens, as well as volunteering to bring local cancer patients to their appointments. Currently, they help to mentor a local single mother and her daughter.

"They're like a daughter and granddaughter to us," Wendell said.

The Coogans have also found their own causes about which they are passion-

ate. Having had a friend with mental illness, Susan said she began educating herself in order to be able to best support her friend, and that education led to activism.

She is involved with the North Central Regional Mental Health Board and has been for more than 15 years.

"We go out to mental health providers and evaluate them to make sure they're in compliance with what they're supposed to be doing," Susan said. "Our reports go directly to the Department of Mental Health."

Wendell has used much of his time to volunteer around town. He is an active member of the Rocky Hill Historical Society and has been working to help edit a 60-page book updating the town's history through World War I.

A member of the Parks and Recreation Board for 17 years,

he is in the process of working with the department to write its master plan, something last completed in 2000.

"It takes the better part of a year to put it all together," he said. "We have to take all of this information and really boil it down."

Along with their various charitable and town-wide activities, the Coogans strive to stay physically active as well. They work out at least three times a week at the Rocky Hill Tennis and Fitness Center, formerly working there part-time at the tennis desk.

"I taught her how to play when she was in her early 30s and she's become a really competent player," Wendell said.

They enjoy playing tennis at the club throughout the week.

"It's mixed doubles and all seniors, 55 and up, so some of us are in our 80s," Wendell said.



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## Living your Best LIFE

Susan also enjoys biking and hiking. When he was younger, Wendell was an avid hockey player.

"I played ice hockey up until age 72," he said.

Wanting to promote the game, he and another teacher in Wethersfield started the Wethersfield ice hockey team in 1973.

"The fellas that played on that team still have an alumni organization," he said.

Roughly 20 years ago, Wendell and some members of that alumni group decided to start offering scholarships for Wethersfield High School hockey players. The group began hosting comedy nights and other fundraisers, and when it came time to name the scholarship, the committee made an easy choice.

"They named the scholarship after Wendell," Susan said. "It's the Wendell Coogan Hockey Scholarship."

He felt thrilled to have the scholarship program named in

his honor, but he was even more proud of what they had been able to offer students. So far, the group has awarded nearly 60 scholarships.

"We gave out eight this last year alone for \$2,000 each," he said.

The couple is also active with the Cora J. Belden Library board of trustees. He is the chairman and she is its secretary.

In addition to giving back to the community, it is important to them to give back to the environment.

"A big part of our lives is our efforts to be energy conservators and be conscious of the environment," Susan said.

They recently installed a second set of solar panels on their home and Susan drives an energy-efficient Toyota Prius.

Their largest environmental efforts, however, come from their expansive gardens. Mere steps from their back porch are row after row of fruit trees, berry bushes and planted vegetables.

"It started as a plot about the size of this quarter, about 20 by 20," Wendell said, gesturing to a small patch of the garden. "When I came here there were two fruit trees and now there are 55."

Much of the food that they eat comes from their own yard. The Coogans grow everything from apples, peaches, apricots, grapes and nectarines to corn, soy beans, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, onions and sweet potatoes, among many others.

Susan, who also serves as president of the Rocky Hill Garden Club, can spend up to three hours per day out in the garden tending to the plants. She and Wendell are committed to growing organically and they never use any kind of pesticides.

"One of the things that happens when you're growing organically is that it's hard to keep away the bugs," Wendell said. "But for us, that's better than the other option of having all those chemicals on your food."

Staying active is an important part of their life. They are enjoying getting to spend time with their four sons, four grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

"We're getting older and a lot of people our age seem to be wanting to slow down," Susan said.

"That's the killer expression right there – I'm older, so I've got to slow down," Wendell said.

"When really the opposite is true," Susan said.

They said staying active is the key to a longer, healthier and happier life.

"Find something you really love to do and be actively involved in it," Wendell said.

Above all else, it is their positive outlook on life that has kept them going and will continue to push them forward.

"Just have a positive outlook on things," Susan said. "Keep your sense of humor and learn to laugh at yourself. Wendell and I try to make each other laugh every day." **RHL**



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# Real Estate



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George Agnelli, Jr., owner of Agnelli Real Estate, announced the affiliation of Maureen Horowitz to the firm. "We are thrilled to have Maureen on our team," stated Mr. Agnelli. "Her 15 years of experience in real estate and her dedication to her clients and community are assets to our agency."

Maureen achieved the designations of Accredited Buyer Representative, Graduate, Realtor Institute and Seniors Real Estate Specialist. As a top producer, Maureen has been a consistent award winner, earning many local and national awards.

A life-long resident of Wethersfield, Maureen graduated from Wethersfield High and Central Connecticut State University. She and her husband are proud parents of Hannah who excelled in the Wethersfield public school system. Maureen has always been active in the community. A volunteer with the Wethersfield Beautification Trust since 1996, Maureen has planted and maintained many gardens throughout town. As a Director of the Wethersfield Dollars for Scholars since 2008, Maureen has helped raise and award thousands of dollars in scholarships. She also serves as a Director of the Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce and volunteers with the Wethersfield Historical Society.

**Buying, Selling or Investing contact Maureen at 860-205-9678 or  
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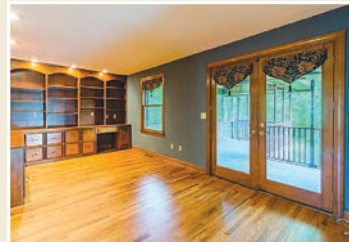


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Historic Talcott Mill, LLC, through its Managing Agent DeMarco Management Corporation, is pleased to announce the new housing opportunity available at Old Talcott Mill. Applications are now being accepted and the property is anticipated to be ready for occupancy in June 2017. Old Talcott Mill is a Workforce Development Housing Community located at 47 Main Street in Vernon, CT within the Talcott Historic District in Vernon, CT. The rehabilitation of Talcott Brothers' Mill offers eighty three (83) residential units. Units will be offered to individuals and families having an annual household income at and not exceeding 60% of the HUD AMI for Tolland County. Income Limit Restrictions Apply. Applications are available at DeMarco Management Corporation in person at 117 Murphy Road in Hartford, CT; by phone (860) 951-9411; by contacting the ATT Relay number 711 or via email at [info@talcottmill.com](mailto:info@talcottmill.com). Applications will not be available at the Property.

The residential space includes a mix of differently sized studio, one bedroom, and two bedroom apartments with rents starting at \$886 - \$1122 with heat and hot water included in the rents. The property offers spacious unique floor plans, fully-applianced kitchens, on-site laundry facilities, fitness room, central air, accessible units, community room and Historic Mill Exhibition.

This development is financed through the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), receives state grant funds from the Department of Housing (DOH), with State and Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits. Income Restrictions Apply.



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## Back to School

# Care packages

Nothing says 'I love you' like a box of goodies

by Lynn Woike  
LIFE Staff



Care packages from home are coveted by students away at school. They bring a taste of home along with some comfort.

"The ideal care package definitely contains something sweet: photographs from home or a letter from a friend or family member are definitely great additions to any care package. Also, something that is actually sweet, like chocolate or cookies that can be shared with friends and roommates are always welcome too," said Olivia Piper of Avon, who recently graduated.

If you can't make it yourself, there are many places that can pamper your child to your specifications.

The Root System in Rocky Hill allows you to customize gift baskets starting at \$55 for delivery in Hartford and most of Middlesex counties.

Mothers often send them after the student is settled in, when finals or something big approaches, for holidays and birthdays, said owner Julie Zadjura.

Favorite and themed foods are common choices.

Because she has a food handler license, Zadjura will shop for everything from bakery goods and nutritious snacks to junk food.

"Definitely comfort foods," she said are popular items, along with seasonal products, and recipients are always happy to receive the packages she delivers.

Whole Foods Market can get goodies to college campuses through its Pantry Perfection baskets with a variety of themes such as Good For You Goodies, The Pantry Pleaser and Snack Attack Basket. Custom gift baskets can also be ordered that contain any product available in the store. Kosher, gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan and other special diets can be accommodated. Local delivery is available, with rates and times dependent on

location. The market's website will get you to this option.

Another option, said Brie George, associate store team leader at the West Hartford store on Raymond Road, is the Instacart app. It allows you to place an order for any item in the store – from bakery and bulk goods to deli, dairy and more – and have it delivered locally or made ready for pick up.

"A lot more healthy snacks are popular with young people," she said.

These include jerky, paleo foods, low-sugar choices, trail mixes, nuts and grain-free items.

"Any kind of protein or energy bars are popular," she said, adding that young people are leaning toward any kind of gluten-free or grain-free chips, along with probiotics.

"Caffeinated energy drinks are hugely popular, and the natural energy drinks that we carry."

Stew Leonards currently offers gift baskets that include a gallon of brownies, a healthy snacks selection, a bucket with three kinds of popped corn, or a choice of coffee cakes. More options are available when the weather is cooler.

Care packages can be customized, but because they are shipped from a production facility, only items shown are available. For instance, because pistachios are available in one of the baskets, ground coffee is in another, and cheese and fruit are in a third, those items can be combined into a special order.

What's offered depends on the season – with many perishable items not available to ship during the heat of summer. During holiday seasons, customizing is not available.

Most colleges are affiliated with a company offering care packages.

The Care Package Program at the University of Connecticut is run by Our Campus Market, which services more than 1,000 universities, said Pat,



Photo courtesy of UPS

a customer service spokesperson at the Pennsylvania-based company.

Parents can choose from a variety of online options such as an assortment of snacks, treats and drinks, or a Halloween-themed package.

Food, however, is not the only option, she said.

Bedding packages, for instance, come in 11 choices and are guaranteed until graduation. Trash cans, rugs, appliances, pillows, mirrors, storage options and just about anything a student needs can be ordered.

Normally, she said, parents will send something in the fall to help their child settle in and again in the spring before finals.

Birthdays also frequently prompt sending packages – some complete with cupcakes.

In many instances, orders can be customized for such things as special diets and allergies, Sue said.

At the University of Hartford's online Campus Store, 42 different care packages are available. There is one that comes with a knit beanie, lip balm, hand warmers, instant soups and oatmeal, and hot cocoa and another that is full of healthy soups and teas. A collection of 50 snacks and treats is another option likely to be popular.

When it comes to packing up goodies to send to children away at school, Mark Coppolelli, owner of the UPS stores in Cromwell and

Wethersfield, suggested that items be placed securely in airtight decorative tins or disposable plasticware.

"Ensure baked goods are cool before packing. When shipping multiple items, pack the heaviest ones on the bottom and ensure all items are tightly sealed. Never leave air pockets in containers; fill gaps with air-filled wrap so the goodies look as good on arrival as they did when they left the oven," he said, offering this hint, "An empty Pringles can makes a good cookie cutter and storage container."

Pack items in a new corrugated box and never use string or wrap it in kraft paper. Provide at least two inches of cushioning on all sides using appropriate packaging techniques and materials, such as bubble cushioning, polystyrene peanuts, corrugated dividers or plastic foam – paper will not hold its shape during transit.

"UPS Store franchisees receive specialized training so we can handle any packing challenge," Coppolelli said.

According to a survey conducted by The UPS Store, once the excitement of independence wears off, 67 percent of college students find what they want most is a taste of home delivered to their mailbox.

"Be the dorm favorite – more than 70 percent of students surveyed wanted to share their care packages with friends and roommates, so pack enough to go around," he added. **RHL**



## Back to School

# Looking ahead

at

# fall fashion trends

Hot looks for when  
the weather cools down

by Allie Rivera  
Staff Writer



**A**s summer starts to wind down, back-to-school shopping begins to ramp up. According to a survey from the National Retail Federation, back-to-school spending in 2017 is expected to reach \$83.6 billion, a ten percent increase from last year's \$75.8 billion.

"It's the second biggest selling season for retailers next to the holidays," Westfarms spokesperson Amanda Sirica said. "We will see a huge spike in back-to-school shopping during Connecticut's tax free week, which begins Sunday, August 20 through Saturday, August 26."

Along with sales of school supplies, electronics and shoes, back-to-school shopping often has a great emphasis on clothes.

"There's something very exciting and exhilarating about fall and a chance for kids to start fresh, and

with that comes a fresh new wardrobe," Sirica said.

For those who may be daunted by all the styles in stores, here are some of the trends that will be making a splash this fall.

"Denim is always a staple of back to school shopping and this year is no exception," Sirica said. "It's actually bigger than ever."

For women and girls, many styles will now include embroidered denim as well as one of the bigger trends of the season – patches and appliques.

"For girls right now there is a lot of patches, and they're putting them everywhere," Susan Macko, owner of LemonLlama Kids' Boutique in Avon said. "They're on jeans as well as outerwear or tunics and tops."

The style of these patches can range from rainbows and butterflies to a variety of emojis, which both Macko and Sirica said are very popular this year.

Along with appliqued and embroidered denim, shoppers can also expect to see more high-waisted jeans in stores.

"You're also going to see colored denim making a comeback and high-waisted jeans," Sirica said.

Part of what is contributing to this style is a resurgence in trends from the 1970s.

"We're seeing a subtle '70s trend coming back," Sirica said. "Last year was the '80s and now we're seeing this subtle '70s revival. Some of the things we're seeing contribute to that are two-tone denim and body suits."

Along with that '70s style is the continuation of all things boho.

"Bohemian is still trending," Macko said. "That was strong last year and that's still around."

Macko and Sirica said shoppers can expect to see flowing dresses and tops for girls and women.

"Those styles look incredible paired with cargo or denim jackets,"

Sirica said.

Also continuing into the fall is a style known as 'athleisure,' which Sirica said is still "going strong."

"That's when you mix and match athletic wear with everyday wear," she explained. "You may have a performance Under Armour top with a denim skirt, or just wearing a full athletic outfit as everyday wear."

For many shoppers, the fabric used is an important part of any outfit.

"In general for the kids, it's all about the fabric and feel and the softness of it. That's why fleece is always so popular," Macko said.

As the days begin to grow colder, Macko said that this season will see a growing trend of fur, either faux or real, as well.

"We're seeing a lot of fur-trimmed hoods and vests," she said. "There are fur pom-poms everywhere. Some of the fur is natural, some of it's dyed, but hats for infants



## Back to School

through adults seem to have either real or faux fur pom-poms.”

Another fabric choice Macko said is popular this season is metallic.

“In general, metallics are popular, especially gold metallics,” she said. “You’ll probably see it in dresses and sweaters this season.”

In addition to shoppers being concerned with a fabric’s feel and look, many are also concerned with how it was made.

“Some of our retailers have started making eco-friendly lines,” Sirica said. “They’re coming out with clothes that are made from recycled materials, like bottles, and turned into textiles.”

Companies such as H&M have started producing these environmentally conscious clothing as well as JCPenney’s Arizona Jeans line, which now has nearly 28 percent of their textiles made from recycled materials.

For those who may be overwhelmed by the task of back-to-school shopping, both Macko and Sirica said that it can be a positive

experience, both for shoppers and their wallets.

“It seems like a daunting task, but it does not have to be,” Sirica said. “Westfarms has parents covered with back to school sales, and you can see online or on our new app what’s on sale before you head out to the mall.”

Whether heading out to a large department store or staying small at a boutique, back-to-school shopping can be pleasant for everyone.

“We always have things that are different that you don’t find everywhere,” Macko said. “There are price points for everyone and we always have sale items. It’s a nice mix so that everybody can find something.” **RHL**

*LemonLlama Kid’s Boutique is located at 29 East Main Street, Avon. They can be reached at 860-678-7087 or online at [www.lemonllamakids.com](http://www.lemonllamakids.com). Westfarms Mall is located at 1500 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford. For more information, call 860-561-3024 or visit [www.shopwestfarms.com](http://www.shopwestfarms.com).*



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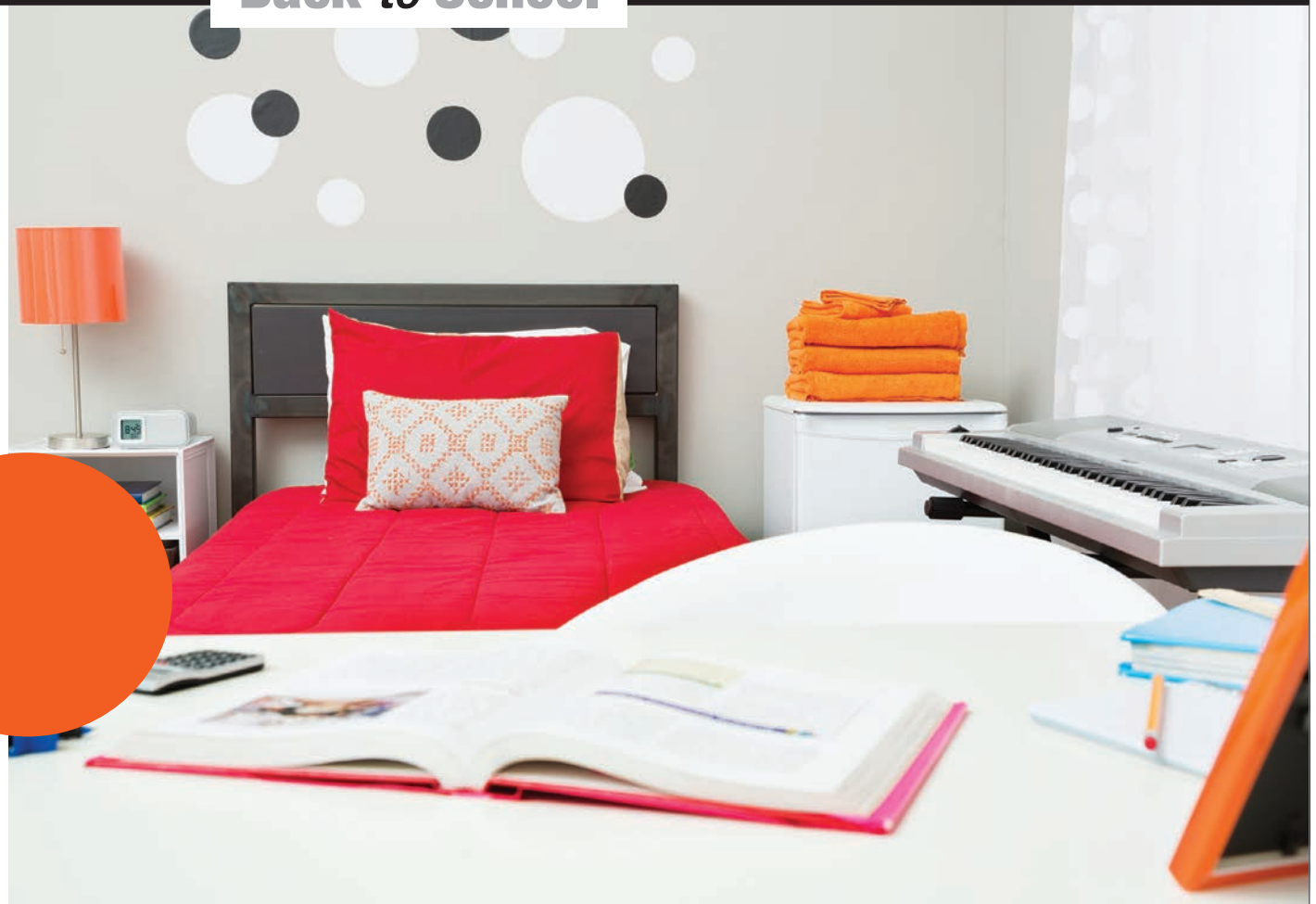


## Back to School

### Dorm days

#### Prepping to make the most of a small space

by Allie Rivera  
Staff Writer



**W**ith the start of school comes a brand new chapter for many young people who are moving out of their family homes and into a dormitory.

For those looking to spruce up the small space beyond the standard issue dresser and twin bed, local retailers

have a variety of options.

“As far as college students going back to school, we have all types of items in our store,” Sheri Jackson, owner of Gillette Furniture Consignment in Wethersfield, said.

Those preparing to live in a small space should think about finding items that make good use of an area.

“We have a Crate and Barrel lad-

der shelf that’s something that, if you don’t have a lot of room, is a nice piece,” Jackson said.

To best utilize space, students can look for under bed storage, however Jackson also suggested finding pieces that can do double duty.

“They can get something like a storage ottoman so they can use it both for storage and as a coffee table,”

Jackson said.

Students can also find pieces that can fold away or be hidden when not in use. “If they’re doing a small apartment, we have a two-seater drop side table,” Jackson said. “They can pull up the sides and use their laptop or eat on it with a friend.”

By shopping consignment, students may be able to find unique items

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## Back to School

that will make their dorm room stand out.

According to Jackson, shopping for dorms at a consignment store, such as Gillette Furniture Consignment, is also ideal for those not looking to break the bank.

"We offer quality, condition and style and I try to have something to hit everybody's price point," Jackson said. "This isn't just old, used furniture. This is quality items at a good price."

At her store, much like for many young people, remaining eco-friendly is a priority.

"We're very earth-friendly," she said. "We're always being conscientious and recycling."

Along with furnishing dorm rooms with shelves and extra storage space, being away from home also gives students the opportunity to decorate however they wish.

"We get a lot of kids coming in here to decorate their dorms," Geraldine Talge, owner of The

Chalkboard in West Hartford, said. "They'll usually have a theme going on that they want to do."

While The Chalkboard is typically thought of as a teacher supply store, Talge said that each fall she gets an influx of college students who find creative ways to repurpose the items they find.

One of the biggest sellers she finds for college-bound students are decorative papers and boards.

"It makes whatever you're putting up look so nice," Talge said. "They do a lot with decorating dorms."

Early in the year, Talge said she sees many students looking to create welcome signs and banners, but as the year progresses, students will return to create new themes for different holidays or celebrations.

"We do sell a lot of inspirational posters as well," Talge said.

For those looking to use this change of scenery as a way to get

organized, The Chalkboard also offers a variety of items to make desk space clean and efficient with folders, notebooks and shelf organizers.

"The first thing I would suggest is a calendar," Talge said. "That's always a great thing to have to stay on top of everything."

When moving into a new space, especially a tiny room, it's important to think creatively to best utilize the space, but additionally it's also important to simply enjoy the new adventure.

"It's just fun when the kids come in because they're always enthusiastic," Talge said. **RHL**

*Gillette Furniture Consignment is located at 32 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield. They can be reached at 860-436-4663 or online at [www.gillettefurnitureconsignment.com](http://www.gillettefurnitureconsignment.com).*

*The Chalkboard is located at 1126 New Britain Ave., West Hartford. They can be reached at 860-236-0044 or online at [www.chalkboardct.com](http://www.chalkboardct.com).*

**"The first thing I would suggest is a calendar. That's always a great thing to have to stay on top of everything."**

**—Geraldine Talge**

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It's time to cut the ribbon to officially open the new Kathy's Urgent Care in Town Center West.

Courtesy photo

# Medical clinic expands

## Kathy's Urgent Care opens second location in Town Center West

by Mark Jahne  
Editor

One by one, businesses and apartment buildings are opening in the Town Center West development at the intersection of West Street and Cromwell Avenue. One of the newest businesses to open is Kathy's Urgent Care.

This is the second walk-in clinic to operate under that name under the ownership and direction of Dr. Thomas Brown. The first is on the Silas Deane Highway in Wethersfield.

The concept is to provide timely and professional medical care, especially after hours and on weekends, when other physician practices are closed. Brown is a board-certified internal medicine and urgent care physician.

He said clinics like Kathy's Urgent Care fill an important niche in the health care industry. They can help people avoid lengthy and expensive emergency room visits and alleviate their suffering at times when their primary care physician may not be available.

His clinic is also able to do quick physical exams for immigration or employment purposes. Reports of patient visits are forwarded to their

primary care physician so there is no fragmentation of care.

The clinic can provide physical exams, preventive services and treatment of any illnesses or injuries that are not life threatening. Kathy's Urgent Care and its services are covered by many health insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid.

Many of the staff members are bilingual and can converse with patients in English and Spanish. At least one speaks Bosnian.

The Rocky Hill location is modeled after the Wethersfield facility. It features six exam rooms, an X-ray room and lab. Blood test results are available the following day and can

be turned around more quickly if necessary.

"What attracted me was the location and what they've done here," Brown said. "As a business owner, this is a very viable location."

Starbucks is located next door and Carbone's Ristorante is coming soon. Other businesses will also open nearby in the coming weeks and months. There are 144 apartments on site.

Brown said it's all about "providing really good customer service and high-quality care, one-stop shopping." He sees urgent care clinics as a good option in a health care delivery system that he otherwise considers to be a mess.

He emphasizes to his staff that the clinic needs to be clean, welcoming and ready to solve people's health problems.

"I have the best staff," he said.

Brown previously worked as a hospitalist, a physician who coordinates all the other professionals providing care to an individual patient. He is trained in internal medicine and worked as an internist. He also spent time as the medical director of a group of walk-in clinics owned by American Family Care.

"Urgent care has really taken off," he said.

That's in large part because insurance companies regard it as a cost-effective alternative to the hospital emergency room. ER visits used to be the norm in the hours after typical physician practices were closed for the night or weekend.

Brown can provide the same referral services to specialists as any other physician. His staff will even make the appointment. He hopes to open additional clinics in the future. **RHL**

Kathy's Urgent Care is located at 865 Cromwell Ave. Hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Call 860-967-3206 or see [kathysurgentcare.com](http://kathysurgentcare.com).



Photo by Mark Jahne

**"Urgent care  
has really  
taken off."  
- Dr. Thomas Brown**

Dr. Thomas Brown performs an ear exam on Analay Martinez at the new Kathy's Urgent Care on Cromwell Avenue in the Town Center West development.



# Where to FIND IT



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## Beach bangles

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# August calendar

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**1 Knitting Group**, 11 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, 33 Church St., 860-258-7623 or rockyhillct.gov/library, also Aug. 8, 15, 22 and 29

**Pokemon Go Safari**, 3 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 15

**Google Computer Science Workshop**, 4 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 8, 15, 22 and 29

**Kids Cook Around the World**, 6:15 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 8, 15 and 22

**CT Hearing Voices Network support group**, 7 p.m., Rocky Hill Congregational Church, 805-817 Old Main St., second floor classroom, 203-391-4968, also Aug. 8, 15, 22 and 29

**2 Playgroup Plus**, 10:15 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 9, 16, 23 and 30

**Book Buddies**, 12:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 9

**Mini Makers LEGO Style**, 3 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 9, 16 and 23

**Maker Camp**, 3 p.m., for grades 4-8, Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 9, 16 and 23

**Coloring for Adults**, 6 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 9, 16 and 23

**Families Read**, 6:15 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 23

**Preschool Music & Play**, 6:15 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 23 and 30

**Mystery Book Discussion**, 6:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

**3 ESOL Classes**, 10:30 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 10, 17, 24 and 31

**Finch Robotics Program**, 2 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 10

**Cora Creates**, 3 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 17 and 31

**Minecraft Club**, 4 p.m., for grades 2-5, Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 10, 17, 24 and 31

**Minecraft Club**, 5:30 p.m., for grades 6-12, Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 10, 17, 24 and 31

**Family Make It**, Take It, 6 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 10, 17, 24 and 31

**Amish Outlaws in concert**, 6:30 p.m., Elm Ridge Park amphitheater, rockyhillct.gov/parkrec

**4 Art Start**, 10:30 a.m., for ages 2 and older, Cora J. Belden Library

**Wii U Gaming Tournament**, 10:30 a.m., for grades K-12, Cora J. Belden Library

**7 Builder Noon**, 4:15 p.m., for ages 4-8, Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 14

**SCORE Small Business Counseling**, 12:30 p.m., registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

**Google Computer Science**, 3

p.m., for grades 6-8, Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 14, 21 and 28

**Google Computer Science**, 5 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 14, 21 and 28

**Music & Movement**, 6:15 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 14 and 28

**Career One-on-One**, 10 a.m., registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

**Fun for Ones**, 10:15 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 15 and 22

**Memory Café**, 2 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 21

**9 Maker Camp**, 3 p.m., for grades 4-8, registration required, Cora J. Belden Library,

**Alzheimer's or Dementia Caregivers Support Group**, 5 p.m., The Atrium at Rocky Hill, 1160 Elm St., registration required, 860-563-5588 or kpernerewski@benchmarkquality.com

**Kids Get Cooking**, 6:15 p.m., for grades K-2, registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

**10 Toddler Time**, 10:15 a.m., for ages 2-3, registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

**12 Alzheimer's or Dementia Caregivers Support Group**, 10 a.m., registration required, The Atrium at Rocky Hill, 1160 Elm St., 860-563-5588 or kpernerewski@bench-

markquality.com

**14 Pokemon League**, 4 p.m., for grades 2-8, Cora J. Belden Library, also Aug. 21 and 28

**16 Kindergarten Welcome**, 6:15 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, 33 Church St., 860-258-7623 or rockyhillct.gov/library

**18 LEGO Free Play**, 10:30 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library

**21 Solar Eclipse Viewing**, 1-4 p.m., Elm Ridge Park

**Families Read**, 6:15 p.m., for grades K-3, Cora J. Belden Library

**22 Dog Swim**, 4 p.m., Elm Ridge Park Pool, \$5 per dog, \$1 per person

**29 Vision/Gratitude Board Workshop**, 2 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

**Coffee Grinders in concert**, 6:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

*Is your club, community organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for inclusion in our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at mjahne@turleyct.com or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.*



# People notes



Gregory Faulkner

**Gregory Faulkner**, an attorney with Robinson+Cole, accepted a fellowship with the Construction Lawyers Society of America. Faulkner is chairman of his firm's construction group. He is a member of the Rocky Hill Zoning Board of Appeals and a former member of the Town Planning and Zoning Commission.

**Amanda Jovino, Daniel Kraynak, Amanda Landry** and **Evan Silvester** were named to the dean's list at Tunxis Community College.

**Daniel Kraynak** was accepted into the Alpha Iota Alpha Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at Tunxis Community College.

The following residents were named

to the honor roll for the fourth marking period at Mercy High School. First honors: **Nibba Ahmed, Emily Crusberg, Sixian Li, Luoqi Liu, Laura Outeiro** and **Julia Wenceslao**. High honors: **Madison Bradley, Brooklyn Bradley, Eugenia Cho, Gabrielle Grant, Jessica Grodovich, Yining Liang** and **Lan Lou**.

**Sharon Hansen, Shona Korr** and **Rachel Meisterling** were named to the president's list at Goodwin College.

**Stefen Lonero, Jessica Markowski** and **Sarah Slowik** were named to the dean's list at Roger Williams University.

**Humairaa Bhura, Mary Harrison, Kristen Lauria, Ryan Reinsch, Erika Peterson, Geetanjalie Neemcharan, Johannah Veinot, Richard Cassarino, Taylor Rocco, Madison Stabile** and **James Sekorski** were named to the dean's list at the University of Hartford.

**Jessica Ptak** graduated cum laude from Bryant University with a bachelor of science degree in actuarial mathematics and a minor in finance from Bryant University. She was also named to the dean's list.

**Jacquelin Saucier** was named to the dean's list at the College of Saint Rose.



Mark Torello

**Mark Torello** was named to the Advisory Council of the Connecticut Society of Certified Public Accountants, representing the Technology Interest Group as its chairman. He is the CEO of the Technology Group LLC in Hartford.

**Carlotta Grate** was appointed to the Advisory Council of the Connecticut Society of Certified Public Accountants. She is a loan accounting manager with UPS Capital Business Credit in Windsor.

**Jenna Lynn Marzilli** was named to the president's list at Clemson University.

**Jeffrey Botticello** and **Kyle Klatt**

were named to the dean's list at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

**Jake Brzozowski** was named to the dean's list at the University of Alabama.

**Peter Kohanski** was awarded the Presser Foundation Scholarship for outstanding musical and academic excellence at the Catholic University of America's Benjamin T. Rome School of Music. He was also named to the dean's list for the sixth consecutive semester.

**Erika Vuernick** graduated magna cum laude from Western New England University with a doctor of pharmacy degree.

**Leah Magnoli** recently completed a study abroad trip to Ireland. Her coursework at Dublin City University included global cultures, social psychology, organizational psychology, introduction to marketing and citizenship, diversity and inclusion.

**Alexander Bondi** was named to the dean's list at Northeastern University.

**James Bondi** was named to the dean's list at George Washington University. **RHL**

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# Slice of LIFE

photos by Lisa Brisson



It was a day filled with many hugs, kisses, laughter and some tears as the Loprete family and their friends celebrated the memory of Maryann Loprete during the 7th Annual Softball Fundraiser to benefit the Maryann Loprete Memorial Foundation at Elm Ridge Park July 15. She was killed by a drunken driver Jan. 28, 2010, shortly before her 28<sup>th</sup> birthday. Funds raised from the event go toward helping the homeless at Immaculate Conception Shelter in Hartford, one of her favorite causes, and the annual Maryann Loprete Memorial Scholarships that are awarded to seniors graduating from Rocky Hill High School.



## Softball for a cause

**1.** Ethan Pancoast, 12, scores a run. **2.** T-shirts and hat sales go to fund scholarships at Rocky Hill High School and to help the homeless at the Immaculate Conception Shelter in Hartford. **3.** Members of the board of directors of the Maryann Loprete Memorial Foundation honor and celebrate her memory at the event. From left are Mickey Perez, Joe Loprete, Lindsay Allen, Laura Chiulli, Angela and Rocco Loprete, Lucy Petrolito and her granddaughter Giuliana Priulli. **4.** Jaden Priulli, 6, dunks a basketball at the fundraiser. In addition to softball games, live music, food and games filled the day. **5.** Lindsay Allen gets ready to watch some ball played by brothers Sean and Dylan Morrissey. **6.** Sal Misseri winds up for a pitch. **7.** These musicians filled the fundraiser with classic rhythm and blues covers. **8.** Bill and Judy Buden check out the silent auction prizes. **9.** Rob Pancoast takes a swing. **10.** Natalie Hoopes makes a catch at first base. **11.** The 7th Annual Maryann Loprete Memorial Foundation Softball Fundraiser was held at Elm Ridge Park. **12.** Rocco Loprete, the father of Maryann Loprete, welcomes neighbor Syrette Green to the event. **13.** Robert and Nadia Rossetti load up on silent auction tickets for a good cause. **14.** Freddy and Jeanette Oliveras enjoy the afternoon.









Pam Matway was named a finalist for Teacher of the Year in West Hartford at the end of the most recent school year. She realized her desire for a career in teaching while attending high school in Rocky Hill, where she still resides today.

**“I think back to sixth grade and I remember my sixth grade teacher. ... To think that kids might have a memory of me is huge.”**

**– Pam Matway**

# Honored for excellence

Lifetime Rocky Hill resident recognized for teaching skills

by Abigail Albair  
Executive Editor

**S**ometimes it helps to think like a 12-year-old.

On a typical Friday morning during the school year, Pam Matway's social studies classroom is humming with the energy of young minds making knowledge connections as she moves quickly among her students' desks, leading the children through an analysis of the average income per capita in Europe.

The Rocky Hill resident who teaches at Sedgwick Middle School in West Hartford uses relatable terms, telling students that the numerical difference between the country with the highest average and the country with the lowest average is a “very important num-

ber,” while the range for mapping the average incomes – the difference between the highest and lowest, divided by five – is a “kind of a big deal number.”

A poster on a bulletin board at the front of the room outlines things an “amazing teammate” does and says. They are resourceful, respectful and compassionate. They play fair, communicate and help others. They say, “It's OK if this is not easy” and “No matter what, you can do this.”

Another sign has the words “I can't” crossed out in favor of the phrase “I currently struggle.”

As students fill in the ranges on their map in different colors, music plays in the background and Matway and her students sing along.

“I feel like everyone is born with a natural talent, and I said to my dad once, ‘I think teaching is my talent,’” Matway said at the end of the last school year.

At that time, she had just been named one of three finalists out of hundreds of educators for the title of West Hartford teacher of the year.

“I think this is my niche. I think this is the thing I was meant to do and grow into,” she said.

She began the Where Everyone Belongs orientation program at Sedgwick two years ago to help students transition to the school. She lives for the moments she makes a personal connection with her students above and beyond the teaching of facts.

“That happens a lot. We have fun. We joke and laugh,” she said. “I feel like I am still a 12 year old at heart. It makes it a lot easier to work with kids. I can get down to their level. I get them. I think I just try to enjoy every day with them and make the best of it.”

Though she said “all days are not perfect,” she enjoys the fact that each day in teaching brings a fresh start, as does each school year.

“There are moments when I leave here and think, ‘That was the worst day imaginable,’ but the next day is a new one,” she said. “If every day was just coming in to work with the kids, that's the greatest part of it all. I love that every year you get to start fresh with a new group. Every



group of kids brings a new dynamic. Every period brings a new dynamic. You get to reinvent yourself. I don't think I've ever taught the same lesson exactly the same in 11 years."

Matway remembers the first time the thought of becoming a teacher occurred to her. She was in a high school social studies class giving a presentation on Native Americans, and, afterward, a classmate complimented her poise.

"It sparked this idea that I could be a teacher," she said.

Having taught dance since the age of 15, the concept of teaching something for which she had a passion was not a new one.

"I was always really enthusiastic about dance. I always had a great time teaching. I was always excited when recital time would come and you could see [the students] be so successful on stage. This is the same thing transferred to a different content area," she said.

Matway grew up in Rocky Hill, where she still lives with her husband – her high school sweetheart – and 3-year-old daughter. Her husband owns Matway Farm in town.

She holds a bachelor's degree in history and a master's in middle grade and secondary education from Quinnipiac University. She has taught in West Hartford for her entire career.

"I've actually been in this room my entire teaching career," she said. "I've been very fortunate. I think it's kind of funny. It'd be cool if I retired here, too."



**Pam Matway works with a student in her classroom at Sedgwick Middle School in West Hartford. Matway is a lifelong Rocky Hill resident and graduate of Rocky Hill High School.**

As she reflected on her years of teaching and the lessons she has learned herself, her eyes filled with tears talking about her colleagues, including the team leader she worked under in her department, John Baldwin, before assuming that role.

"Everything I do now as a team leader, I think, 'What would John do.' He has inspired me to be my best."

She added of the rest of her team, "I am who I am today because

of them."

After more than a decade of teaching, many of her students are now in college, though several of them and their parents still keep in touch.

"I think back to sixth grade and I remember my sixth grade teacher. ... To think that kids might have a memory of me is huge. Just to know I've made an impact on them in some way. Even if it's the fact that I can do the worm, which, literally,

they think is the most exciting thing in the world. To know that I've had an impact on their life and maybe one day when their kids are in sixth grade, they'll remember their teacher and tell their kids that story is amazing."

She called being nominated as one of three finalists for teacher of the year "surreal."

"I never would have imagined it," she said. "Just to be considered a great teacher is incredible." **RHL**

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# News roundup

## Happy 100 years

Rocky Hill resident Herb Philbrick was honored July 9 on the occasion of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. A party was held at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. He is also a Navy veteran of World War II and served in the Pacific Theater of Operations.

## Talk a walk and learn history

The Rocky Hill Historical Society is planning a walking tour of the Rocky Hill Center Historic District at 1 p.m. Aug. 26 in cooperation with the Central Connecticut Health District. The focus will be on historic homes and the people who lived in them.

The society has done extensive research and prepared a document which it plans to use as a tour guide that will be made available on [rhhistory.org](http://rhhistory.org) two weeks preceding the event. Town Historian Bob Herron will lead the tour. It will start at Academy Hall at 785 Old

Main St., progress to Washington Street, then down Riverview Road, across Glastonbury Avenue and up Pratt Street. It will turn right onto Belden Lane, then left up Glastonbury Avenue, and end at Academy Hall.

## Town wins finance award

Rocky Hill received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for its comprehensive annual financial report. This is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting.

## Correction

A story in last month's issue about the Scoops & Sprinkles ice cream shop did not mention that Austin Chase is also the son of co-owners Shane and Kim Aforismo. **RHL**



Happy 100 years

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## LIFE with Pets

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## Meet Suki and Lee



Suki

### Suki

Suki is a 9-year-old female seal point Siamese cat. She is quiet, but friendly, and enjoys people and attention. She loves to have her fur stroked and her neck rubbed. **RHL**

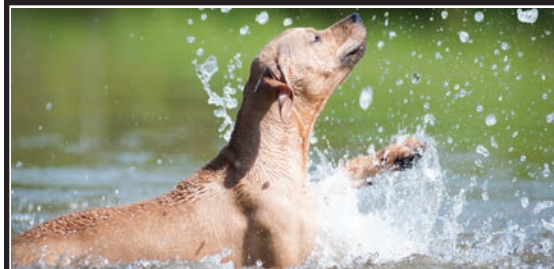


Lee

### Lee

Lee is a gentle and friendly male bloodhound, 3 ½ years old. He requires a single-family home – no apartments or condominiums – and children who are gentle and respectful with animals. He needs daily exercise. Lee has no experience with other pets in the home. The best fit would be someone who has prior experience with bloodhounds.

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# Editorial

## It's as different as night and day

**A** recently retired Hartford police sergeant decided he still enjoyed working in law enforcement. So he joined the Wethersfield Police Department.

Sure, it meant having no seniority and going back to working the overnight shift. But it was an opportunity to do what he enjoys, which is to help people by assisting them at their most difficult moments and otherwise keeping them safe.

The transition from Hartford to the town right next door was not going to be difficult. Police work is police work wherever you go, it's the severity and the volume of calls that are different.

But as he drove along the Berlin Turnpike one night while on patrol the light atop Travelers tower caught his eye. He was so close to his former professional "home" that he could see part of its skyline.

Yet he said he felt like he was a million miles away. It's as if the world completely changes when one crosses the invisible dotted line that separates the city from its immediate suburban neighbors.

The difference between Hartford and its suburbs is dramatic. Connecticut's capital city has a much higher level of poverty and lower per capita income than its surrounding municipalities. The quality of life is not the same. City government is scrambling

to avoid bankruptcy.

The officer noted that one of things he finds in the suburbs that makes him scratch his head is the fact that some people leave their cars in the driveway overnight unlocked and with valuables on the seat. Nobody in Hartford would ever take such a risk, he said.

People in towns such as Cromwell, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield generally feel safe. The majority of them support their local police.

In Hartford, he often found mistrust, if not overt opposition. There are many reasons for that. He found lots of good people, too, but they lived with a sense of unease because of the criminal elements that poverty breeds.

Hartford police run fast and hard all day long. Calls for service are received almost non-stop. It's not unusual for calls that do not involve immediate threat or harm to be backlogged until things quiet down a little bit, perhaps a day or two later.

Not so in the suburbs. Almost every call, including those involving what are deemed quality of life issues, garners a prompt response.

It's a much bigger issue than can be resolved here but, if Connecticut is to survive and thrive, how can it continue to allow Hartford and its other major cities to struggle with all of the challenges spawned by poverty while residents of suburbs right next door can trust that they will always enjoy safe neighborhoods and fiscally sound government? **RHL**

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**BY MARK DIXON**  
**WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]**



# Solar Eclipse Time!

**T**his month marks the first Total Solar Eclipse since 1979, for the contiguous United States. What is it, and what do you need to know? ...here are the details:

The event is happening on Monday, August 21st. As seen in the graphic, those from Oregon to South Carolina will be in the

path of totality (a path roughly 70 miles wide). This is where the moon passes directly between the sun and Earth, entirely blocking the sun for a matter of minutes – at the same time, casting the moon’s shadow on Earth. The longest duration of the total eclipse is approximately 2 minutes and 40 seconds, when passing over Illinois!

Here in Connecticut, we will not see a “total” eclipse, but a “partial” one. This means the moon will only partially block the sun. On the 21st, for viewing from the Nutmeg State, the partial eclipse will begin around 1:25 p.m., reach its maximum point at 2:45 p.m. then end around 4 p.m. (lasting 2.5 hours, from start to finish).

Viewing will be weather permitting, of course. Furthermore, if visible, you will want to do so safely. Do NOT look directly at the eclipse. Using traditional sunglasses won’t suffice, even if they’re very dark. Instead, you will need special “eclipse glasses” that utilize a special-purpose solar filter. **RHL**

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